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# FORTUNES

# WASHED

# AWAY

A Series of  
Dramatizations  
of Better  
Land Use

No. 150    March 8, 1941    1:15 p.m.

"LITTLE WILD CLOVER"

## W·L·W CINCINNATI

United States Department of Agriculture  
Soil Conservation Service  
Dayton · Ohio

THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
PUBLISHED WEEKLY  
CHICAGO, ILL., MAY 1, 1913  
Vol. 10, No. 18

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SOUND: Whistling wind...

VOICE

Black blizzards across the plains.

SOUND OFF MIKE: Woman coughing...

SECOND VOICE

Biting wind!

DEEP VOICE

Choking dust.

SOUND: Up wind, set fire...

VOICE

Havoc...

SECOND VOICE

Destruction...

DEEP VOICE

Waste...

SOUND: Up wind, kill fire, set flood...

VOICE

Floods rushing down the great valleys.

VOICES IN UNISON

Floods, drowning, killing, wasting...

SOUND: Up wind...

DEEP VOICE

The wealth of America washing and blowing away -- soil erosion!

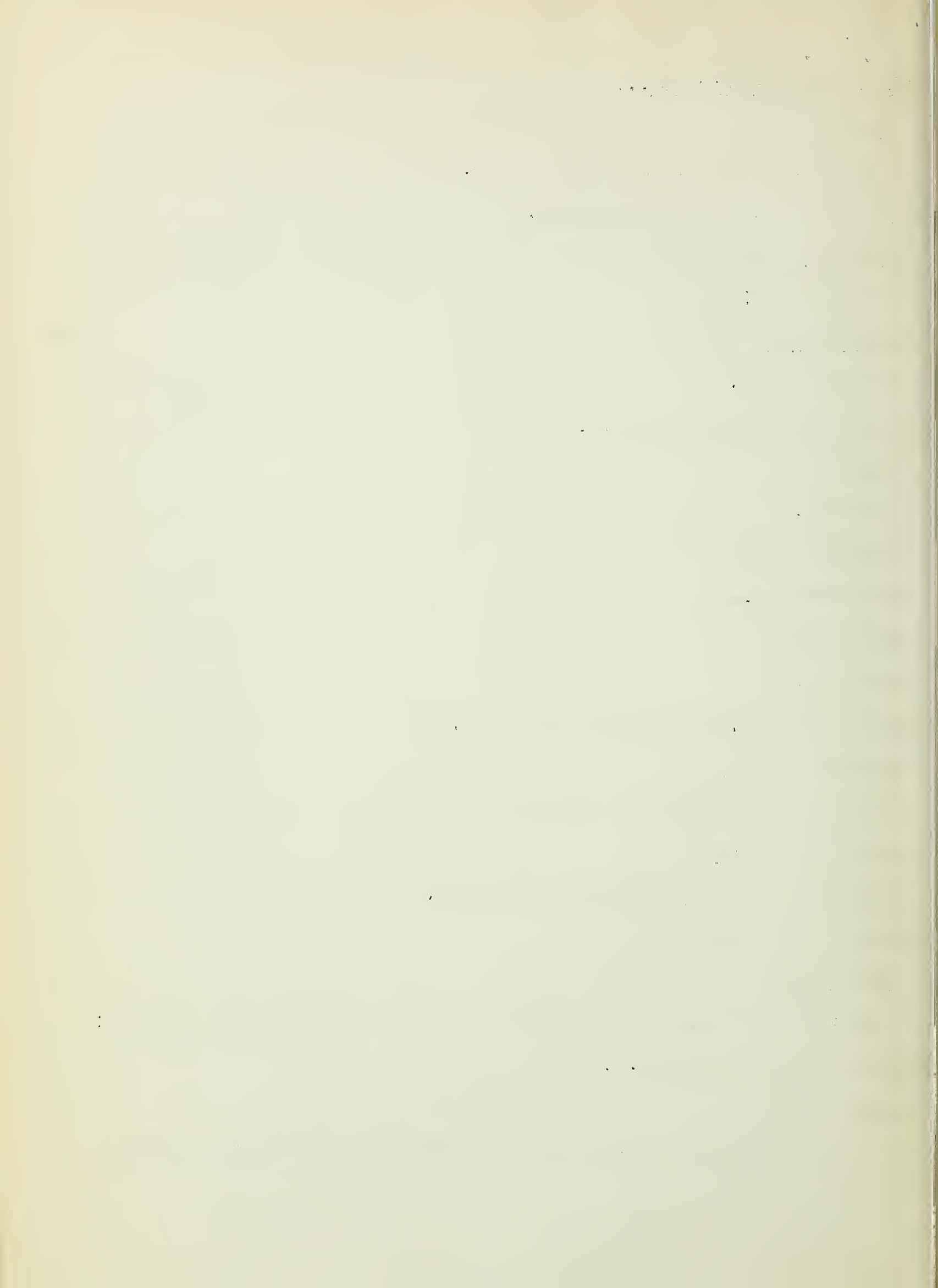
SOUND: Clap of thunder...

ANNOUNCER

Little Wild Clover: the 150th consecutive episode of Fortunes

Washed Away!

ORGAN THEME: DEEP RIVER



ANNOUNCER

Far, far away, in the midst of the war-threatening clouds of the Orient, jutting out toward Nagasaki between Broughton Bay and the Yellow Sea is a peninsula and 200 islands -- Korea. Korea is distinctly mountainous, has no plains or prairies deserving of the name. Instead, it has precipitous hills, steep-sided valleys. Despite this rugged topography, Korea -- which means "morning splendor" --- is an agricultural country, raising ginseng and bamboo, rice and barley, persimmons and mandarin oranges, and the plant that has meant salvation to many an eroded farm in the southland of these United States of America. This plant, first called "little wild clover" because it had three leaves, is not a clover at all. It is Korean lespedeza.

ORGAN: MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME, fading behind...

ANNOUNCER

Far, far from the war-threatening clouds of the Orient, jutting out toward Indiana and the Ohio River, is Union County, Kentucky. Union County is rolling, has many a rich farm, many a poor farm, many a good farmer. This is the home of Charles Meacham, a conservation farmer. Charles Meacham is the man who, more than all others, is responsible for Korean lespedeza's introduction into Western Kentucky. It all began in Birmingham, Alabama, several years ago, when...(FADE)

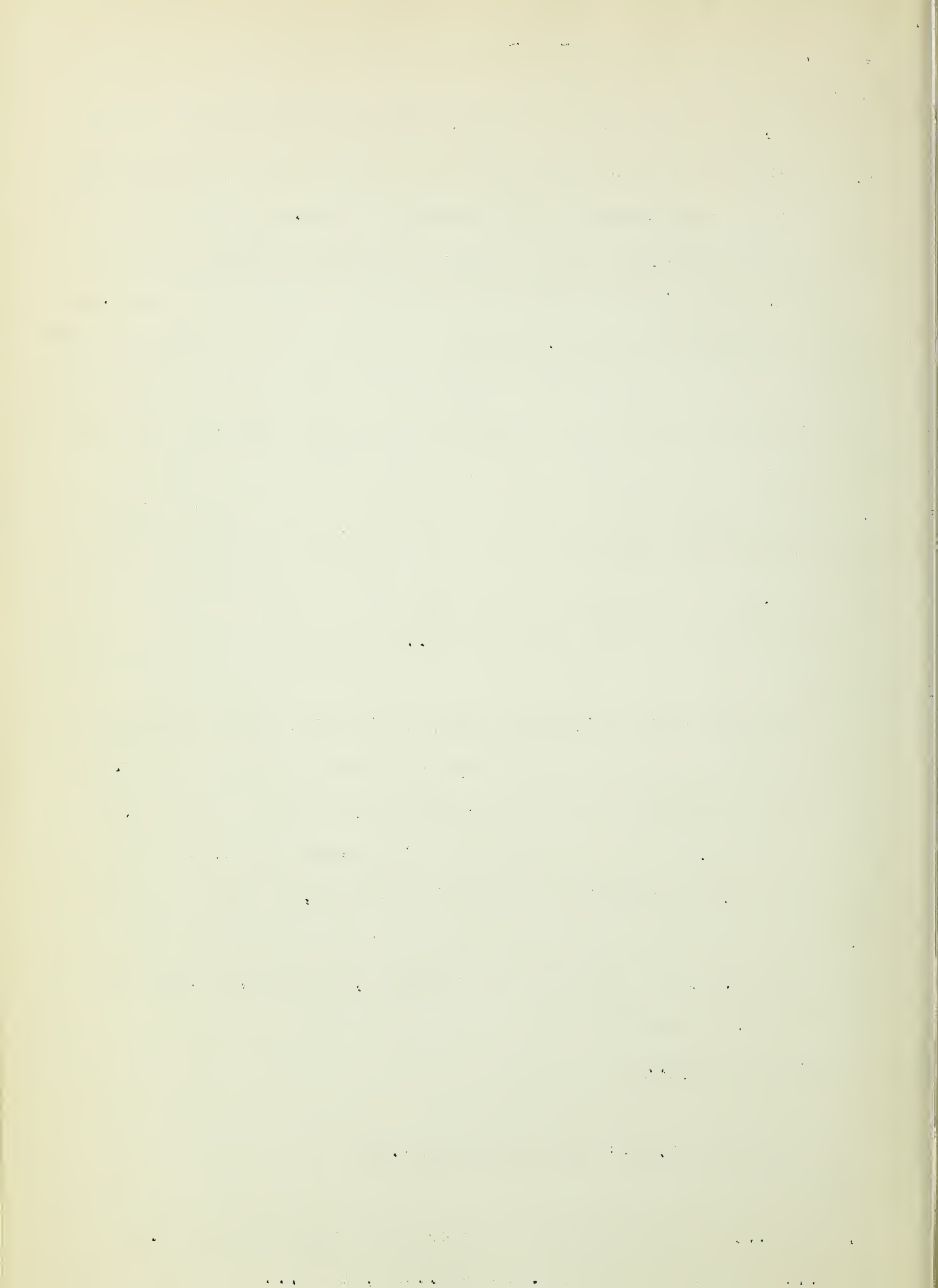
SOUND: Door bell rings...

ANNIE

There's the door bell. I'll see who it is.

MEACHAM

Please, Annie...I want to get this contract figured out. Now, let's see...ten sacks of cement...three...no, four...





SOUND: Door opens...

ANNIE (off mike)

Oh, a telegram. I'll sign for it.

MEACHAM

This doesn't seem quite right. Still....

SOUND: Door closes...

MEACHAM

Who was it?

ANNIE

A telegram.

SOUND: Telegram torn open...

MEACHAM

Who's it from?

ANNIE

From father.

MEACHAM

What's he have to say?

ANNIE

Here it is: Well, what are you going to do. That's all.

MEACHAM

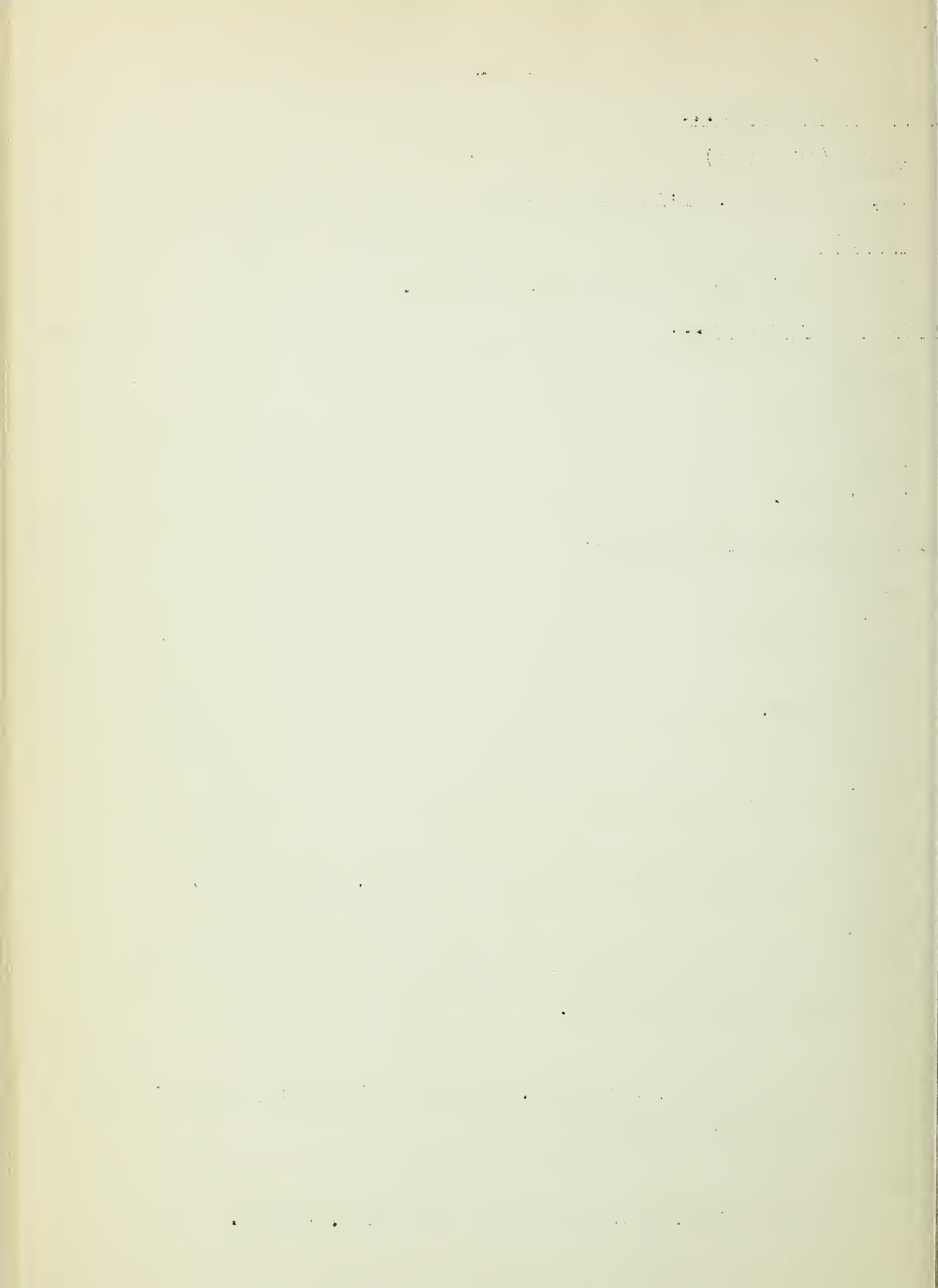
The same old story. Either he's going to come live with us or we'll have to live with him.

ANNIE

But try to understand, Charles. I'm the only child, and it's only natural that he's lonesome.

MEACHAM

I suppose so. We've got to make up our minds, I know.



ANNIE

It's up to you, of course. You're in the cement business, and always on the go...always moving here and moving there...

MEACHAM

And he has a farm.

ANNIE

How would you like living on a farm?

MEACHAM

Well, Annie, to tell the truth, I have been thinking about it. Your dad is getting too old to farm....and I could help him out. I'm sure of that much. But me.....me, a farmer. A Hopkinsville boy turned farmer. Oh, no...that would be too much! But still...

ANNIE

Charles...please.

MEACHAM

It's quite a jump.

ANNIE

Morganfield is such a nice place. In the summer, when the grass is green...in the spring, when you can just smell the loam being turned over, fragrant and mellow, new life for new crops....

MEACHAM

Me, Charles Meacham...farmer. All right, Annie, wire your father we're coming home.

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE.

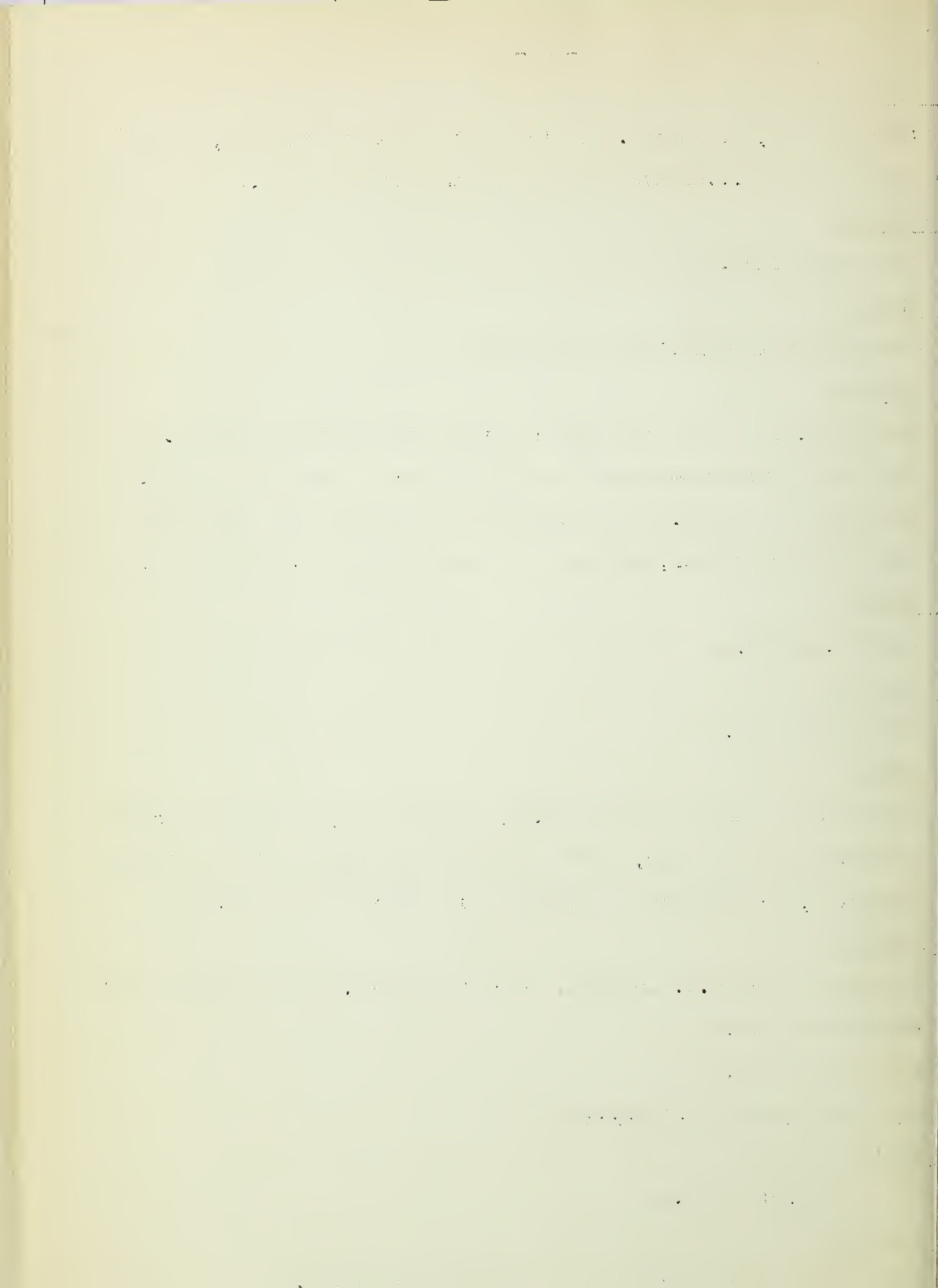
SOUND: Door opens and closes...

HAMNER

Oh, it's you, Charles.

MEACHAM

Yep. Just got rid of the last of those scrub bulls.



HAMNER

Fine. Now we can go in for purebred livestock.

MEACHAM

The whole county's headed that way, Mr. Hamner, thanks to Hub Gayle.

HAMNER

A fine county agent. Oh, there's a sack of some sort for you over there.

MEACHAM

If it's what I'm looking for....

HAMNER

Your brother Rodman left it.

MEACHAM

That's what it is, then....sure enough! It's that lespedeza seed he promised to give me, Mr. Hamner.

HAMNER

It's that lespe....that what?

MEACHAM

Lespedeza. I'm going to plant some of it to see what it'll do.

HAMNER

What in thunderation is lespedeza?

MEACHAM

Why, it's a legume, like clover or alfalfa. It's an annual.

HAMNER

Oh, oh...now I remember hearing about it. Seems like it's been in this country for some time, in the south especially.





MEACHAM

Not this kind. You're thinking of Jay-pan. This is a new kind. They used to call it "little wild clover", I believe. Anyhow, a fellow named Dr. A. J. Pieters from the Department of Agriculture got some of this seed...it's Korean lespedeza...and now Rodman has some of it and I promised to try it out.

HAMNER

No you don't...not on my farm! I don't want any of that Jap weed on my farm.

MEACHAM

But Mr. Hamner...Dr. Pieters has tried it out on several farms. It's a soil builder, it prevents erosion, and it makes swell hay. Of course, I know it never has been grown in Western Kentucky, but from what I've heard, it'll grow on eroded fields that won't grow anything else. Now, my idea is to sow some of it...

HAMNER

That's enough, Charles. I told you I don't want any of that Jap weed on my farm.

MEACHAM

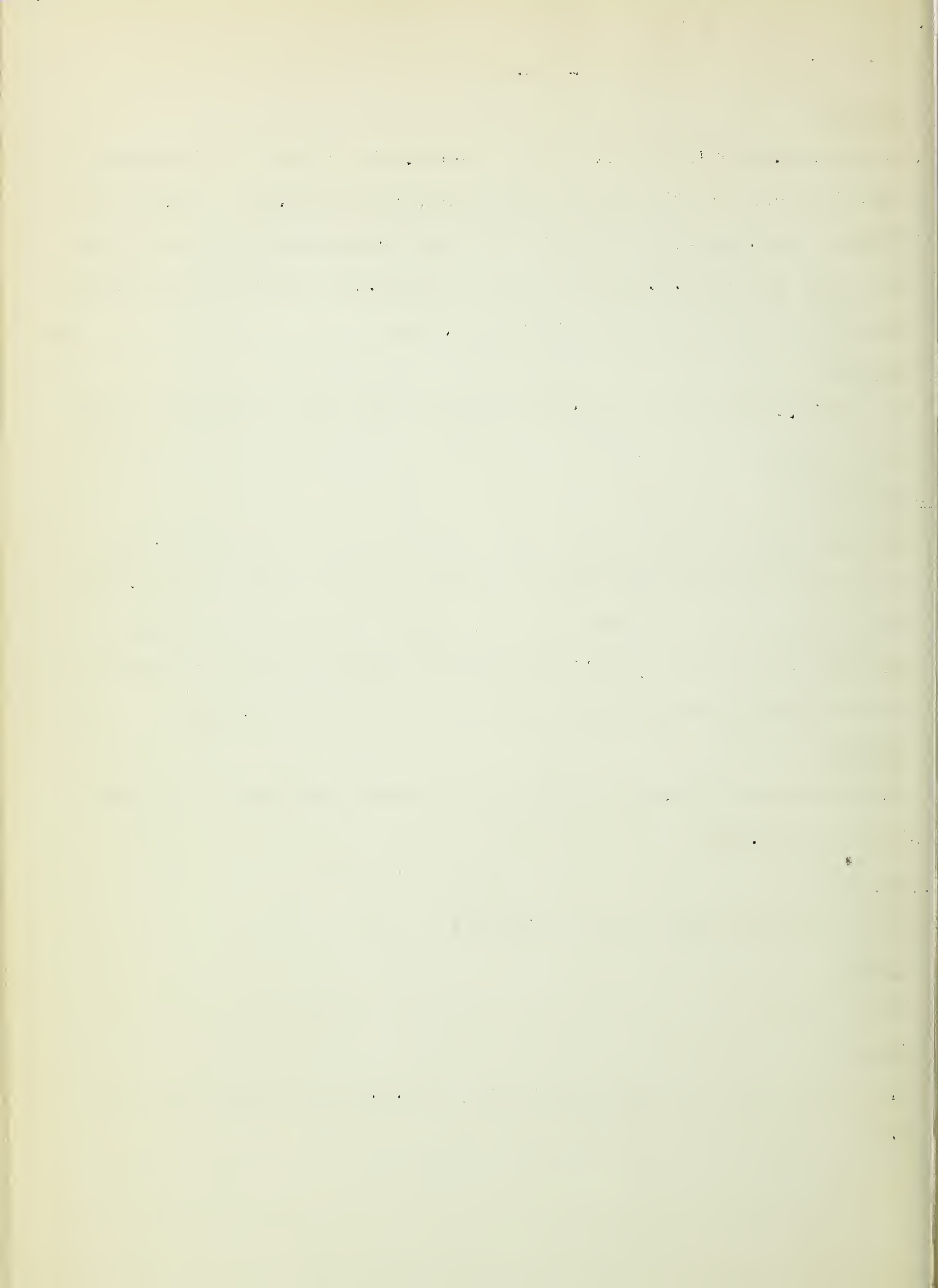
Then I....I'll buy a farm of my own!

HAMNER

What with?

MEACHAM

Well, I've got a little money saved up, and...you could go on my note.



HAMNER

Thunderation! I might as well advance you the money outright. I'd have to pay for it sooner or later anyhow. That's the trouble with you city boys. It's hard enough getting you up in the morning, much less teaching you how to farm!

MEACHAM

Mr. Hamner, you've been mighty nice to me and Annie here. But I do want a farm of my own. I've got my eye on one just south of here...105 acres. And....if I swing the deal, I'm going to plant that Korean lespedeza!

HAMNER

You know, Charles...you've got spunk. I didn't mean to be harsh with you.

MEACHAM

I know you didn't, sir.

HAMNER

If you want your own farm, get one. Close by, mind you. And I'll help you, my boy. But I won't have that lespede....that lespedeza on my farm!

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE.

HAMNER (fading in)

What in thunderation are all those men doing over at your barn, Charles? You having an auction sale?

MEACHAM

Why, they're sacking up the lespedeza seed.

HAMNER

Now don't try to tell me you're going to sell that seed. You can't even give it away.





MEACHAM

Lespedeza is the coming thing for Kentucky, Mr. Hamner. This is 1929, and we don't know a lot about it...but ten years from now we will. I believe it will make fine hay. And you should see how it holds down the soil!

HAMNER

I'll admit that much. I was by your field before you started cutting it, and it really had a thick stand.

MEACHAM

It surprised me, even. I sowed ten pounds to the acre....30 acres of it, and...well, you could throw a silver dollar on it and it wouldn't reach the ground. Mr. Hamner, I'm going to get close to 18,000 pounds of seed from that 30 acres.

HAMNER

But what in all get out will you do with it?

MEACHAM

Sell it.

HAMNER

Sell it? Sell it! Why, there aren't enough fools in the country to buy that much lespedeza.

MEACHAM

We'll see about that. I'm not hiring all those men over there on just a wild guess.

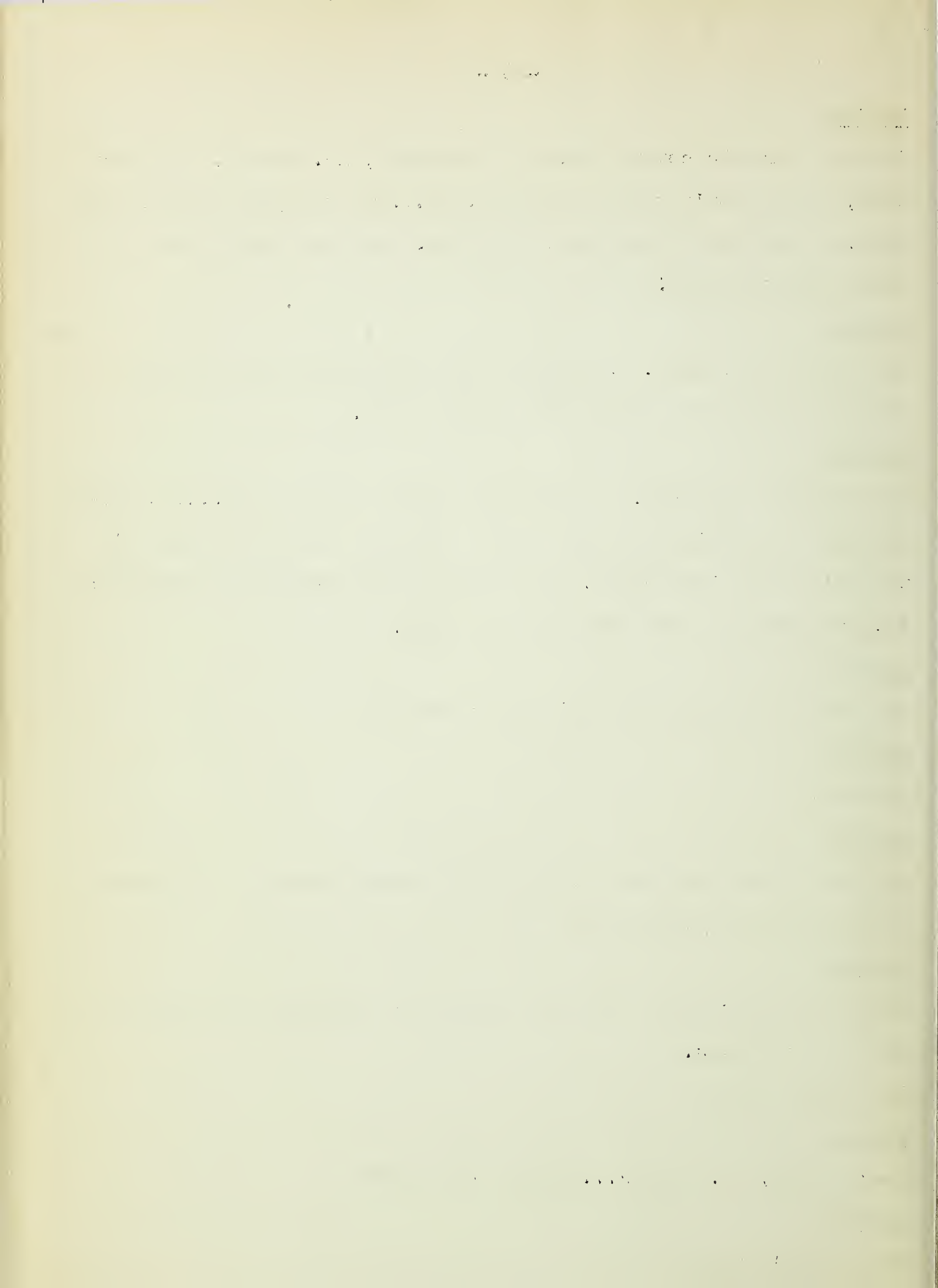
ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE

MEACHAM

There it is, Mr. Hamner...a check for \$1800.

HAMNER

Huh? What's this?



MEACHAM

\$1800....from a Louisville seed firm...for lespedeza seed. You've been a farmer a long time, Mr. Hamner...much longer than me. But you, and me, and others like us, have got to look ahead, too. These soils around here are getting tired, and it looks like lespedeza will be a good tonic. We won't always get good prices for seed like I have this year. I've paid for my farm in one year, thanks to lespedeza. Now I'm going to keep it the rest of my life, by farming it right.

ORGAN: Sneak in AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL

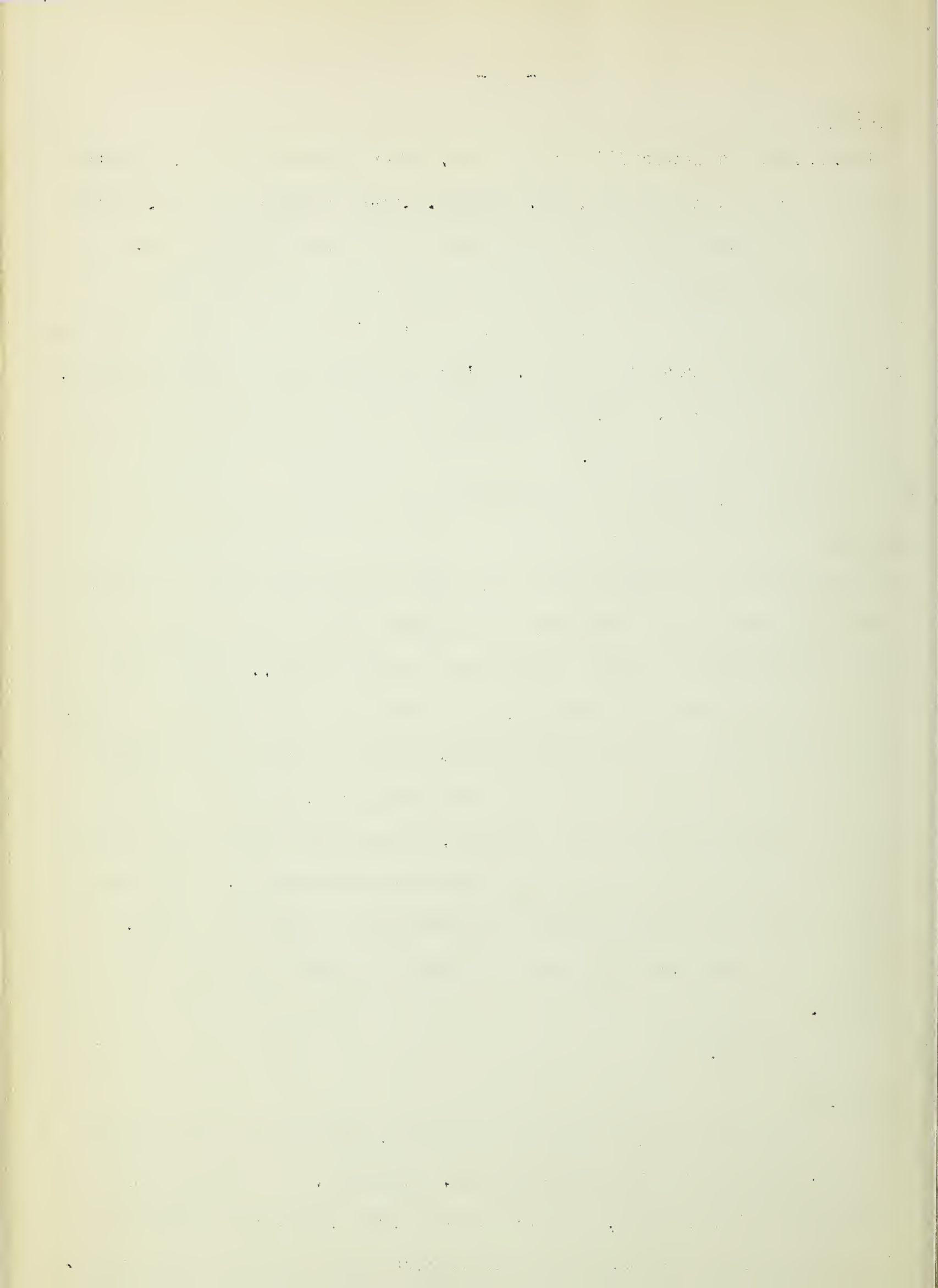
HAMNER

I'm getting up, as far as years go, but I reckon we can all learn something every day. Kentucky is a great agricultural state in a great agricultural nation. Lespedeza is new, sure...but if new plants can be found that will grow on worn and acid soils, if something can be done to bring back thousands and thousands of acres of abandoned lands to reasonable fertility, if something can be done to prevent further soil erosion, we can look with pride upon a land of permanent prosperity, permanent agriculture. Charles, I wish you'd plant some Korean lespedeza on my farm next year. It'd make me feel like I'm doing my part to hold this soil of America.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

That is the true story of Charles Meacham, pioneer in introducing Korean lespedeza to Western Kentucky. And now, for further information upon this legume, we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and to Ewing Jones.



JONES

Before we go into that, \_\_\_\_\_, let's round off the story of Charles Meacham. Bill Survant -- he's a conservationist with the Morganfield CCC camp -- Bill took me out to the Meacham farm the other day, and we found an up-to-date farm in every respect. Not only lespedeza, but hybrid corn, of which Mr. Meacham is mighty proud, and justly so. He's a cooperator with the CCC camp, and has installed a complete soil-saving plan. No doubt he'll play an important part in the newly-established soil conservation district. When you talk to him, and see what a farmer he really is, you can understand why he was named a Kentucky Master Farmer in 1935. Now, about lespedeza, \_\_\_\_\_.

ANNOUNCER

The Korean variety in particular.

JONES

Korean lespedeza is an annual legume that makes seed and dies the year it is sown. It's quite a lot like common lespedeza, but it makes a larger growth and can be grown further north.

ANNOUNCER

And what kind of soil is it grown on, Ewing?

JONES

Naturally, it will do best on good soil, where it may grow as high as two or more feet. But it will grow on thin soil, too, and does best when it is given both lime and fertilizer applications. And since it is a legume, lespedeza tends to build up soils, although probably not as rapidly as clovers.

ANNOUNCER

But on the other hand, I suppose you can grow lespedeza where you can't get good stands of clover.





JONES

Right, \_\_\_\_\_, that's a point in its favor. Its advantage lies in its ability to grow where clovers fail. Naturally, it fits into places where legumes are especially needed for fertility. On eroding soil, or in gullies, lespedeza is an excellent plant to sow to retard the erosion. Broadcasting a small quantity of seed on bare ground will usually start the crop -- although here again lime and fertilizer will help out -- and the lespedeza will spread slowly and help bind the soil to check further soil washing. And remember this -- for erosion control it always does better when managed properly.

ANNOUNCER

Now how about its uses other than for erosion control and soil building. Pasture, obviously, is one use.

JONES

That's the chief use. It can be used as rotation pasture -- and in that case it should be sown in a mixture with other legumes, grasses or small grain. It can be used as permanent pasture. It can be cut for hay.

ANNOUNCER

Quite a crop, then, is Korean lespedeza -- and quite a name, too.

JONES

Yes, lespedeza is an oriental species belonging to a genus first named from an American plant by a French botanist in honor of a Spanish governor of Florida. Now it's transforming the agriculture of the Southland.

ORGAN THEME: DEEP RIVER



JONES (on cue)

This is Ewing Jones, speaking for the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. Goodbye, \_\_\_\_\_, and goodbye farm friends until next Saturday at this same time, when Hal Jenkins will be with you for another story of "Fortunes Washed Away."

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

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